

Florida Mountain Mining Sites,
Lower Nottingham Mine
Silver City Vicinity
Owyhee County
Idaho

HAER No. ID-31-E

HAER
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37-SILCI
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Engineering Record
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD
FLORIDA MOUNTAIN MINING SITES, LOWER NOTTINGHAM MINE

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Location: The Lower Nottingham site is located in a steep ravine above Jacobs Gulch on the western slope of Florida Mountain in Owyhee County, Idaho.

Quad: USGS DeLamar Quadrangle, 7.5'
UTM coordinates: Zone 11, 518530 E, 4761800 N.

Date of Construction: ca. 1880s-1930s

Present Owner: Kinross DeLamar Mine Company

Present Use: To be demolished

Significance: The structures are associated with mining activity (1880s-1930s) in southwestern Idaho. The site is associated with John F. Sullivan and Robert Noble, two local mine owners.

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Date: June 1995

Site Layout and Description:

The Lower Nottingham site is located in a steep ravine above Jacobs Gulch on Florida Mountain. A cabin (Building A) sits on a small knoll above other structures in the area. Surrounding vegetation consists of pine, fir, mountain mahogany, and low brush. The cabin, which probably served as a residence, is only partially standing. Its dimensions approximately 10' by 12'. Its remains indicate it a wood frame building, covered with a cedar shingle roof and board-and-batten siding. The extant flooring consists of tongue-and-groove wood boards over a milled post-and-beam foundation. The windows faced south. They were sliding casement windows with one-over-one lights. Tin surrounds the stovepipe opening on the roof. Decorative barge boards were located on the cabin's corners and roof ridge. Tin debris lies all around the site.

A structure is located on a broad ledge south of Building "A"; down the gully from the Upper Nottingham site. Remnants of trolley rails and supporting posts run downhill along the gulch from the Upper Nottingham to the structure, along with pieces of 8" and 2" pipe. Some timber and rock cribbing line portions of the gulch. The structure (Building B) is totally collapsed. It looks like it was originally a wood frame building with heavy post-and-beam construction. There are indications of windows on the south side. Some barbed wire, plain wire, a stool, hinges, and lots of 8" pipe are located among the structural debris. A waste rock dump is located on the side of a ledge directly below the structure.

The bunkhouse (Building "E") is located on the south side of the ledge below the Upper Nottingham waste rock dump. Some remnants of trolley tracks lead to this building. Vertical pipe is protruding out of the hill above the bunkhouse area. It was a balloon frame building with board-and-batten wood siding. The floor consists of wooden tongue-and-groove boards. Its dimensions are approximately 27' by 40'. Among the debris are some 1930s-style linoleum, parts of an iron stove, and china shards. A couple of boards were painted, respectively, red and yellow. Near the south side is a grayish-green slag dump, and east below the ledge lies a waste rock dump with more tracks leading to it. Also two cot frames are located by building's south side.

Historic Context:

The Lower Nottingham mine, as well as the Upper Nottingham mine, were part of a larger area known as the Jacobs Gulch Placer workings. The workings cover an extensive area. The upper end of the Jacobs Gulch placers were first worked during the 1860s. At the same time all of Jordan Creek was worked for ten miles from above Silver City to Wagontown.¹

Historical evidence indicates that John F. Sullivan, who came to Silver City in 1864, worked placers in the vicinity of Jacobs Gulch over a period of time from 1868 to the early 1900s. These workings include what later became known as the Tonawanda and Roosevelt placers.

A placer known as the Jacobs Gulch placer workings is mentioned in the Owyhee County index to mining claims in 1876. This placer was located "by the old sawmill on Jacobs Gulch" by A. McDonald, Samuel Strange and others in March 1876.² On December 25, 1880, John F. Sullivan transferred to William Hardiman "a piece of placer ground known as the Jacobs Gulch diggings, together with sluice boxes and other appurtenances thereto. Price \$1200."³ Newspaper

accounts from Silver City indicate that the placers in Jacobs Gulch were worked until the 1930s. It is difficult to identify the individual placer claims. They are seldom specifically named and generally known as the placers at the "head" or "lower" end of Jacobs Gulch.

John F. Sullivan was a long-time miner on Florida Mountain and worked several different claims on the mountain. Sullivan was in Jacobs Gulch as early as 1868 when he located a mine called the Dardanelles.⁴ Sullivan relocated this claim in 1878 and renamed it the Shannon.⁵

He worked the east side of Florida Mountain beginning in 1880. That year with a partner, Robert Morrison, he built a dwelling and shaft house near their Republic mine on the east side of Florida Mountain.⁶ In 1881 Sullivan bonded his undivided interest in the Republic to W. H. Dewey. He continued to locate and mine other claims on Florida Mountain in the general vicinity of Jacobs Gulch. For the next year Sullivan worked at his mine, the Paymaster, at the head of Jacobs Gulch.⁷ Although he had sold a placer claim to William Hardiman in 1880, Sullivan maintained other placer properties in Jacobs Gulch. During the same time he worked the Paymaster, he also worked his placer diggings in Jacobs Gulch, "reaping a golden harvest".⁸

Sullivan constructed several ditches to bring water to his claims. In 1868 he built one to bring water from Louse creek to his mines in Jacobs Gulch. In an interview with the Idaho Daily Statesman in 1911, Sullivan claimed the DeLamar Company was still using the ditch.⁹ He also constructed a ditch to convey water from Blue Gulch across Jacobs Gulch, and eventually extended it to Rocky Gulch.¹⁰

In 1882 Sullivan continued to work his Jacobs Gulch placer claim. He also ran a drift on a ledge he had found some years earlier in the Dardanelles. The ore was similar to the Empire State and it was thought to be the ledge that fed the Jacobs Gulch placers.¹¹ He worked this ledge for a year, and dug a shaft 45 feet deep. The following year he leased the mine to three miners--Andy Brannan, Hank Giffin, and Pat O'Hearn. In 1884 he ran a tunnel to the strike ledge and continued to work the mine for several more years.¹²

Beginning in January 1887 and until at least 1894 Sullivan was mainly involved with his mines on the east side of Florida Mountain. He held and worked the Phillips and Sullivan mines in partnership with Isaac Phillips [see Historic Context for Phillips and Sullivan Mines]. In 1895 Sullivan dissolved his partnership with Phillips and he began to concentrate his efforts on the Jacobs Gulch claims.

In June 1896 Sullivan located the Molly Pitcher in Jacobs Gulch.¹³ He held four claims at the head of Jacobs Gulch: three that covered the old placer diggings in the gulch.¹⁴ His claims consisted of the Shannon (formerly known as the Dardanelles), the Steuben (formerly known as the Shamrock), the Paymaster and the Molly Pitcher. In July, Sullivan crosscut a tunnel to the Harrison claim, which lay east of his group. Later that year he leased his group of mines to James Stewart and others. It was reported in the March 5, 1897, issue of the Owyhee Avalanche that the lessees had several tons of ore to ship for milling.

Sullivan located another ledge at the head of Jacobs Gulch and went into partnership with Robert Noble, a well known livestock raiser, in 1901. Newspaper articles from the Owyhee Avalanche and Silver City Nugget describe the large quantity of ore being taken from their claims. While the newspapers do not name the mines (only calling them the Sullivan and Noble properties) deed records indicate that Noble and Sullivan jointly owned the Shannon lode, which included the Blain, Harrison, Tonawanda placer and Harrison mill site, as well as the Molly Pitcher. The Owyhee Avalanche and Silver City Nugget for 1901 state that 80 tons of ore were taken from these claims. The ore was hauled to the Poorman mill for milling. The mill, which had been closed down, was reopened to process the ore from the Sullivan and Noble properties. Later that year, another strike was made on the properties farther north and higher on the mountain from the first find.¹⁵ 200 tons of ore were taken to an arrastra near Silver City for crushing in 1902. In the winter of 1903, Sullivan found the long-sought-for vein of ore in the lower tunnel of the Sullivan and Noble properties.¹⁶ That summer, Sullivan's cabin in Jacobs Gulch burned down and he rebuilt it while continuing to mine his properties.¹⁷ Deed records indicate that only Noble located the Searchlight, which bordered the Harrison on the east, in 1904.

After 1904 there is no mention of John F. Sullivan in conjunction with the claims and it is possible that he sold his interest in them to Robert Noble. Sullivan died in 1912, his obituary noting that he was a well-known mine operator in Silver City for 40 years.¹⁸

Robert Noble maintained his interest in these properties and others in Jacobs Gulch. In 1913, records show that Noble filed proofs of labor on the All Right, Crystal Glance, Ida May, King Edward, Nellie Grant, Roosevelt placer and Searchlight.

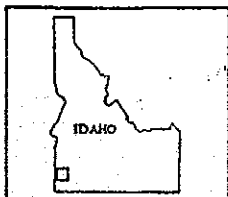
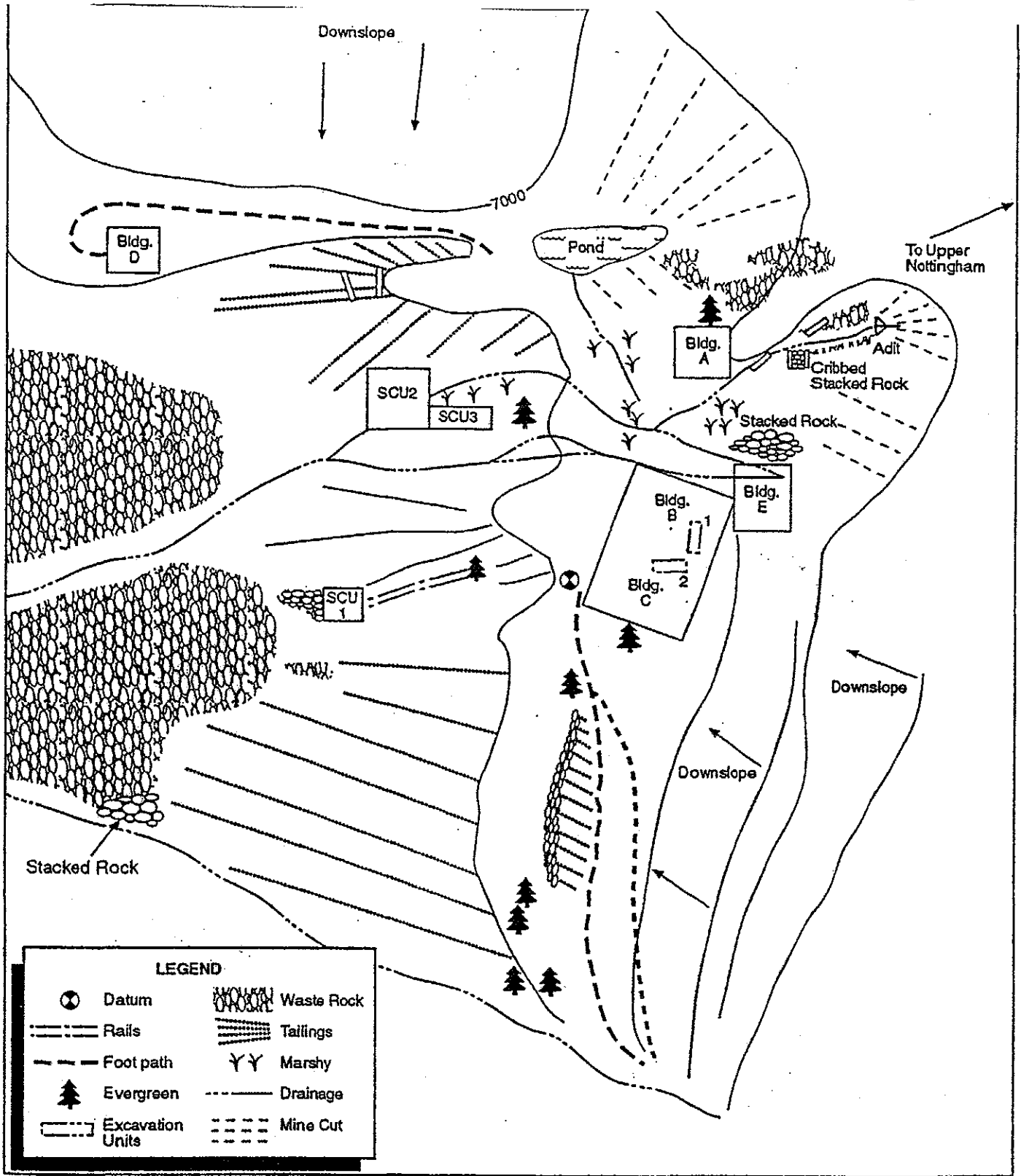
Noble died in 1915 and his heirs leased the properties. Various groups worked the claims well into the late 1920s. One of his heirs was his daughter Rozella Nottingham: hence the Shannon, the Searchlight and others became known as the "Nottingham" group of mines. Noble's heirs lost the mining properties to back taxes in the early 1930s. In 1958 Thomas Brunzell filed a location notice for the Molly Pitcher. However, no production information is available for it or the other claims that made up the Noble and Sullivan group.

The mines that eventually became known as the Lower and Upper Nottingham produced enough silver and gold that the owners worked them continuously for at least twenty years. They are examples of mines that operated without support from corporations based in California or the east.

END NOTES

1. Caldwell Tribune, October 30, 1897 page 1.
2. Owyhee County Mining Claims, Book 6, page 30.
3. "Transfers of property," Idaho Avalanche, December 25, 1880, page 3.
4. Owyhee County Mining Claims Book 6, page 345.
5. *Ibid.*
6. Owyhee County Mining Claim Book 6 page 548.
7. Owyhee County Mining Claims Book 6, page 608.
8. "Mining Notes," Idaho Avalanche, May 7, 1881, page 3.
9. Owyhee Avalanche, January 27, 1911, page 3.
10. See several descriptions of Sullivan's mining claims in Owyhee County Mining Claims, Books 6 and 11.
11. "Mining Notes", Idaho Avalanche, November 25, 1882, page 3.
12. "Mining Mention", Idaho Avalanche, January 19, 1884 page 1.
13. Owyhee County Mining Claims Book 11, page 7. Please note that this mine was first located as the "Moly Picher" and through subsequent change in ownership identified in recent reports as the "Molly Pitcher."
14. "Mining Mention", Owyhee Avalanche, July 24, 1896 page 1.
15. Owyhee County Mining Claim Book 6, page 345.
16. Silver City Nugget, January 16, 1903 page.1
17. "Local and Personal," Silver City Nugget, June 19, 1903, page 1.

18. "Pioneer Miner Passes Away," Idaho Statesman, November 12, 1912, page 11.



LOWER NOTTINGHAM MINE

